

they passed the Davis home Snowball slackened his pace and Una seemed always waiting for him, and came out to caress him and feed him lumps of sugar.

"Our mountain air is doing you good, Miss Dacre," spoke Bruce one morning. "Mrs. Davis tells me that at home you had your own pet horse. I never did it before, but—Snowball would be a kitten in your gentle hands. I would feel proud and honored if you used him."

Thus it came about that Bruce saw a great deal more of Una Dacre than was good for his peace of mind. Snowball seemed to share his regard for the lovely girl from the East. It got to be so that it was a regular thing for Bruce to come around with Snowball, and for Una to start off on one of those stirring rides that brought fresh color and brilliancy to her eye.

At times Bruce was fairly jealous of the growing attachment of the splendid animal to a person whom Snowball knew was a friend of his master. Bruce would stand watching the picture of grace and beauty dashing along the ravine patch or scudding like an arrow over the level ground.

One afternoon—ah, he never forgot it! he had seen Miss Dacre mounted and away along the river reach where the bluffs rose high and craggy. He had his rifle with him and was about to join some comrades on a hunt for the afternoon, when he arose erect and thrilled.

Snowball was in sight, and swaying in the saddle, a superb horsewoman. Una had never seemed so lovely—or dear to him. He had sighed forth the hopelessness of the love he dared not express. Now alarm drove every other sentiment from his mind.

A shrill, piercing cry, almost a scream had suddenly rent the still air. On the opposite side of the river a horse and rider had come into view. At some unusual sight the horse had suddenly reared, threw its rider and,

dashing up to the very edge of the bank, stood uttering forth that echoing challenge which Bruce had heard.

"Spitfire!" exclaimed Bruce, and he recognized the dismounted rider as the man to whom he had sold the mate of Snowball over a year ago.

And then his heart stood still. An answering call, glad, riotous, delirious rang out from Snowball. He had seen his old friend. All was forgotten, of discipline, of gentleness. Once more he was on his native plains racing with the companion of his early years.

"She is lost!" died in the ranchman's throat. "Oh, my love! my love! And I helpless!"

Snowball had disdained curb, bit and spur. He had veered and was making for the point where the road was unguarded. More than once the daring steed had sprang down that treacherous reach, had swam the river and gloried in the adventure.

In a flash Bruce knew that once Snowball started down that steep incline Una was doomed. A misstep, a stumble would be fatal. Superb horsewoman as she was, she could not retain her seat.

"I've got to do it—for her sake!" issued from Bruce Telford's lips in a hollow groan.

He had less than two minutes in which to act; if he would save the woman he loved—but, oh, the terrible sacrifice.

With a sob he raised his rifle. He was a sure shot. Bank—crack! And Snowball fell not 20 yards from the verge of the dreadful precipice.

Bruce saw the animal quiver, stumble and fall inert. He saw Una extricate herself from the saddle, apparently unharmed. Then, white as death, he bowed his head where he stood, almost broken-hearted.

Thus Una found him. Her hand trembled as it touched his arm. Her voice was full of tears.

"You—you saved me," she faltered; "but, oh, Snowball!"

Bruce did not speak. It seemed as